

### Series B.

- N° 1. COAL PRODUCTION IN THE RUHR DISTRICT. Enquiry by the International Labour Office end of May 1920, issued on September 1st 1920. *In English and in French.*
- » 2. PAPERS RELATING TO SCHEMES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF RAW MATERIALS AND FOOD STUFFS, issued on October 5th. *In English and in French.*

### Series C.

- N° 1. THE BRITISH LEGISLATION ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, issued on October 26th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- » 2. L'ACTION GOUVERNEMENTALE DANS LA LUTTE CONTRE LE CHOMAGE EN ITALIE, issued on October 27th *In French only.*
- » 3. THE BULGARIAN LAW ON COMPULSORY LABOUR, issued on November 4th 1920. *In English and in French.*

### Series D.

- N° 1. STAFF REGULATION ON THE FRENCH RAILWAYS, issued on September 4th 1920. *In English and in French.*

### Series H.

- N° 1. THE CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN 1919 (Denmark and Sweden), issued on September 8th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- » 2. SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE BELGIAN CO-OPERATIVE OFFICE, issued on September 25th 1920. *In English and in French.*

## INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

GENEVA

September 26th 1920.

## Studies and Reports

Series A

No. 12

# The Fourth International Congress of Bookbinders.

The Fourth International Congress of Bookbinders was held in the Green Hall (Salle Verte) of the Maison du Peuple at Berne, on the 28th, 29th and 30th September 1920.

The International Federation of Bookbinders was formed in 1907, on the initiative of the German bookbinders; its headquarters was established in Germany. The second Congress took place at Amsterdam in 1910, and the third at Brussels in 1913; the fourth was to have been held at Christiania in 1916, but the war broke out, and it was not until September 1919 that the Secretariat was able to take the first steps with a view to resuming international relations. Differences having arisen in various quarters, the Congress was not able to meet until a year later.

### Delegates :

Belgium	1	Delegate representing	4,600 members
Denmark	1	" "	3,500 "
Germany	5	" "	87,000 "
Great Britain	2	" "	112,000 "
Italy	3	" "	49,000 "
Netherlands	2	" "	3,050 "
Norway	1	" "	1,700 "
Austria	1	" "	5,959 "
Sweden	1	" "	3,300 "
Switzerland	6	" "	1,800 "
Czecho-Slovakia	2	" "	3,200 "
Hungary	1	" "	4,558 "

The Federations of France, Poland and Sweden regretted their inability to attend. Those of Brazil, Bulgaria, Jugoslavia, Croatia and Slavonia, did not reply to the invitation. The International Labour Office was represented by a member of its staff.



The Secretariat had asked the Russian organisations to send representatives. A German mission to Russia undertook to deliver the invitation. A wireless message announced that delegates had been appointed; they received authorisation to cross Germany but on their arrival at Basle, the Swiss authorities refused to allow them to pass through. In spite of the steps taken by the Swiss Federation this decision was not modified. The Congress decided to send a telegram of sympathy to the Russian delegation, and to make further representations to the Federal Council, which, however, were without result.

*Agenda :*

The following questions were included in the Agenda :

- (1) Constitution of the Conference.
- (2) Report of the Secretary.
- (3) Resumption of International Relations.
- (4) Discussion of proposals made by the Federations.
- (5) Fixing of the future Headquarters of the International Secretariat and nomination of the Secretary.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CONFERENCE.

Hauseisen (Germany), the International Secretary, opened the Congress. After recalling the events which had suspended the operations of the Secretariat, he desired that the Conference should forget the past. "The responsibility for the war rests with capitalism, and not with the working classes. We German workers do not fear a discussion of this subject, but if you wish to do useful work it will be well to put on one side for the moment everything which might divide us."

The Congress then expressed sympathy with the Hungarian proletariat "in its heroic struggle for existence", and with the Italian proletariat in its efforts to "liberate itself from the capitalist yoke". It then dealt with the first question on the Agenda, the Constitution of the Conference.

The International Constitution provides that every Federation admitting workers employed in bookbinding works, account book manufactories, paper-ruling works, and in the cardboard, leather case making, fancy paper and fancy goods industries, has a right to be admitted to the International Federation.

The English and Italian Federations include, besides the workers engaged in the industries above mentioned, those employed in the manufacture of paper. Of those there are 30,000 in England and 19,000 in Italy.

The Congress decided to accept these two Federations with the whole of their members, which brought up the number of members represented by the 26 delegates present to

206,219. In addition, it instructed its secretary to take the necessary steps with a view to grouping all similar branches in a single international federation.

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY.

The International Secretary having complained in his report of the Belgians having taken part in an inter-allied and neutral conference, an incident took place on this subject.

The Belgian delegate declared that the meeting held in Paris had for its object precisely the consideration of the resumption of general international relations, and that, moreover, a country against which no complaint was made, Holland, was represented there no less than Belgium. He did not accept the slur cast upon his country, and refused to approve the general report.

The Congress took note of these observations, and decided to add to the report a clause declaring that the Belgian Federation had acted correctly in taking part in the Conference in Paris.

*The Dual Organisation in Czecho-Slovakia*

The Czech delegate recalled that the last conference in 1913 denied the right of the Czechs to be independently represented, for the reason that their country formed part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The roles being now reversed the same rule should be applied to-day; so much the more that the Czech Federation embraced the whole country, while the German organisation only included the workers in the town of Reichenberg. Czecho-Slovakia to-day was an independent State. The grouping of the workers in rival ethnical organisations could not be regarded without apprehension for the future of the country. After a delegate of the German organisation had spoken, complaining especially that the Czechs had refused to allow the latter organisation to take part in collective bargaining, the Congress passed the following resolution.

"THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BOOK-BINDERS HELD AT BERNE ON THE 28TH AND 29TH SEPTEMBER 1920,

BEING CALLED UPON TO DECIDE AS TO THE AFFILIATION OF THE CZECHO-SLOVAKIAN FEDERATION, AND PARTICULARLY THAT OF THE GERMAN WORKERS OF REICHENBERG THE "GRAPHISCHE UNION",

CONSIDERING THAT UNDER THE RULES ADMITTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION ORGANISATION NOT MORE THAN ONE FEDERATION OF THE SAME INDUSTRY MAY EXIST IN EACH COUNTRY,

CONSIDERING THAT THIS QUESTION IS NOT OF A VOCATIONAL CHARACTER, BUT RATHER APPERTAINS TO THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN GENERAL,

RESOLVES TO ADMIT THE ORGANISATION IN QUESTION PROVISIONALLY UNTIL THE NEXT CONFERENCE, AT WHICH THE QUESTION SHALL BE DEFINITELY DECIDED,



AND HOPES THAT IN THE MEANTIME THE FEDERATIONS IN QUESTION WILL TAKE STEPS WITH A VIEW TO THEIR FUSION, AND INSTRUCTS THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE OF BOOKBINDERS TO SUBMIT THE QUESTION OF THE GERMAN ORGANISATIONS IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA TO THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN LONDON ON THE 22ND NOVEMBER, 1920."

#### THE RESUMPTION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

The necessity of the resumption of international relations was obvious. The number of Federations taking part in the Congress confirmed it. Accordingly the vote taken on this subject was unanimous. The programme of the Federation will be the same as in the past : its international secretariat will have the following duties :

- (a) To establish relations between the organisations of different countries.
- (b) To obtain reciprocal information and mutual agreements regarding vocational and economic questions and to enter into conventions relating to responsibility.
- (c) To prevent immigration of foreign workers when wage movements take place.
- (e) To act as intermediary with a view to procuring financial assistance in case of heavy expenditure or lock-out.
- (e) To obtain the general co-operation of all the federations of bookbinders.

#### DISCUSSION OF PROPOSALS MADE BY THE FEDERATIONS.

##### *Reciprocal Agreement between Federations*

##### *Affiliated to the International Secretariat*

Under the terms of the Constitution, the members of the federations affiliated to the International Secretariat on their departure from their own country receive from the president of their federation an International Identity Card, "the card for use abroad". The members of all the federations adhering to the convention of reciprocity who have paid at least fifty-two weekly contributions and are in possession of a regular card for use abroad receive travelling expenses according to the constitution of the federation to which they apply. If a member finds work in a country whose federation has adhered to the convention of reciprocity, he must present himself to the President of the Federation through the intermediary of the local section, and at the expiration of fifteen days deposit his card for use abroad with a view to joining such federation.

The Dutch Delegate made some reservations. The execution of reciprocal agreements is more difficult in that country than anywhere else. The national workers out of employment must be provided for in preference to foreigners. Moreover, it has been remarked that if the latter are too numerous they exercise a bad influence on the conditions of labour. The German and Swiss Delegates protested against this view. This question not having formed the subject of preliminary debates in the different countries, the Congress decided to adjourn it to the next meeting, but on the proposal of the Scandinavian Federations it resolved to modify the constitution in the following manner :-

"Foreign workers coming to a country in search of work shall report themselves immediately on their arrival to the nearest Section, and shall not accept employment without first ascertaining the conditions of labour in the district".

A question connected with the last, that of the granting of unemployment relief, was also raised, but it was decided to refer it for consideration to the secretariat, which should present a report to the next conference.

*Contributions.* — As regards the contribution of each federation to the international organisation, the Congress adopted a rule the originality of which deserves attention. The contribution is calculated on the basis of the wages of the best paid workers : it is equal to two hours wages per 100 men and one hour per 100 women.

*Home work.* — Mrs. L. Krzmin, a German Delegate, drew the particular attention of the Congress to the exploitation of women in home work. She pointed out that and the laws are inadequate in this matter and protested against the Danish law prohibiting the employment of married women in industrial undertakings. It could not be denied that women had the same right to work as men; such measures could only add to the misery of many homes.

The delegates of several federations explained the position of the question in their respective countries :

*In Belgium,* home work and piece work were abolished among bookbinders by collective agreements; they continued in the paper and cardboard factories — however, it was hoped to abolish them altogether.

*In Holland,* the situation was the same as in Belgium. It had not been possible to abolish home work in the cardboard trade on account of German competition.

*In Switzerland,* with one or two exceptions home work was abolished among bookbinders. In the cardboard trade German competition made the struggle more difficult.

The German delegate explained the position in his country. His federation had done all in its power to obtain the



abolition of piece work and home work, but it was faced with resistance from the employers and often even from the workers themselves. In certain districts the workers would have nothing but home work. Last year an arrangement between employers and workers secured that the output of home workers should not exceed that of workers employed in factories and that in the two cases wages should be identical.

The competition of which Dutch and Swiss Federations complained was due to the superior equipment of the German factories on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to the exchange which favoured the efforts of the employers to export their goods. After taking note of these statements, the Congress passed the following resolution :—

“THE ATTENTION OF THE CONGRESS HAS BEEN DRAWN TO THE QUESTION OF HOME WORK, EXISTING MORE PARTICULARLY IN PAPER-MAKING AND SACHET-MAKING WHICH IS DETRIMENTAL TO THE WORKING CLASSES.

HOME WORK RESULTS IN CONDITIONS OF SLAVERY AND MUST BE CONSIDERED AS THE WORST FORM OF EXPLOITATION.

AS REGARDS HOME WORK, LABOUR LEGISLATION AND CONDITIONS OF WORK ESTABLISHED BY CONVENTIONS ARE WORSE THAN ILLUSORY, A FACT WHICH INDUCES EMPLOYERS TO ENCOURAGE HOME WORK IN PREFERENCE TO WORK IN THEIR OWN WORKSHOPS.

HOME WORK COMPETES WITH AND HINDERS THE EFFORTS OF THE WORKING CLASSE FOR EMANCIPATION.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BOOKBINDERS ACCORDINGLY INSTRUCTS THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT TO CONSIDER THIS PROBLEM AND TO LAY BEFORE THE NEXT INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS PROPOSALS WITH A VIEW TO EFFECTIVELY COMBATING HOME WORK.”

#### THE SEAT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT.

Since 1907 the seat of the International Secretariat has been in Berlin. The Paris Conference had passed a resolution in favour of its removal from Germany.

The English Delegates proposed Belgium, the Italian delegates Switzerland, and the Hungarian delegates Germany.

The Belgian Delegate declared that he was unable to accept the charge.

The Swiss Delegate made the following declaration :

“We have already considered this question and in our opinion neither Belgium nor Germany should have the international Secretariat on account of the war. We should have liked to see either Holland or Denmark proposed : we will only accept the charge if it is not possible to agree to any other country”.

The German Delegate then spoke as follows :

“We have always placed the Trade Union Movement before our personal ambitions. The German Federation has done everything possible to serve the International. Then came the war. Since then distrust exists between different countries, and it is generally considered that Germany should

no longer keep the Secretariat. We cannot admit that she has deserved the loss of esteem and become unworthy to discharge an international mandate, but since in your opinion it will be better to transfer the secretariat to a neutral country, we shall not insist, but are disposed to vote in favour of Switzerland”.

The Swedish, Italian, Dutch, English and Czecho-Slovak Delegates pronounced in favour of Switzerland, while declaring that they had no feeling of distrust towards Germany.

The Congress unanimously decided on Berne.

Mr. Hochstrasser of the Swiss Federation was elected International Secretary.

A Committee composed of five members (one from Great Britain, one from Germany, one from Italy and two from Switzerland) was then appointed. It will meet once a year between the meetings of the Congress for the purpose of considering important questions.

The next International Conference will take place at Copenhagen in 1923. <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> After the close of the Congress, on the evening of the 30th September, two Russian Delegates arrived at Berne after crossing the frontier in an illegal manner.

At their request it was decided to hold a sitting on the next day to hear a report on the situation of the Russian organisations, but it was stipulated that no modification could be introduced into the resolutions passed, as the Congress was closed.

The following is the statement made by one of the Russian Delegates after he had attempted, without success, to induce the Conference to alter its decisions.

“The economic situation of Russia is quite different from that of the countries of Western Europe. Industry developed there very much later than in other countries ; trade unionism did not exist there at a time when it was already very advanced in Germany.

In 1903 the bookbinders formed a union.

After the revolution of 1905 the trade union organisations were persecuted, and they were repeatedly dissolved, but did not disappear.

In 1906 the first Conference of bookbinders took place at Helsingfors, and at this it was decided to establish a newspaper, which was secretly circulated throughout Russia.

In 1917, after the revolution, the trade unions developed in a very short time to considerable proportions ; there were soon more than two million organised workers.

After the revolution of October the Soviet trade unions, attached to the Communist Party, played an important part in the internal life, of the country, whereas in foreign countries the trade unions have only a vocational character. They organised production under the supervision of a central organisation. They organise the exchange and distribution of products, and undertake other functions which in a capitalist state do not fall to trade unions.

After the revolution the technical experts and the managers of factories ranged themselves on the side of the bourgeoisie, and their absence provoked considerable unemployment.

At this period there were two trade union organisations in the printing trade, one “red” (“Bolshevik”) and one “yellow” (“Menshevik”), the latter composed especially of officers and former employers.



These two organisations were constantly in conflict, and the Directive Committee was led to dissolve the "yellow" trade union, and to replace it by a Provisional Committee.

A special conference has been convened to be held in Moscow on the 25th October next for the purpose of appointing a new committee which "we are convinced" will have a Bolshevik majority.

The graphic industry, like the others, has suffered much from the situation created by the war. The best workers were sent to the front; famine ravaged the interior of the country, and many workers abandoned their vocations to plunge into speculation.

It is easy to understand that in such circumstances labour can only resume its activity with difficulty.

The future of the regime depends upon the economic situation of the country. After the defeat of Koltchak, Youdenitch and Denikin, it was possible to bring back to the interior troops which on being demobilised returned to work. The transport services improved; it was possible to bring food from Siberia where wheat was spoiling for want of means of transport; the loaf which had cost 400 roubles fell to 240. From the moment that we were free from the anxieties of war the situation improved, and that was why the "capitalist Governments" let loose the Polish offensive.

Your Federations must bring pressure to bear upon your Governments. The Trade Union Organisations must enter into the political field, for if you allow the Russian revolution to be stifled a terrible reaction will rage in Europe."

The Russian Delegate, in conclusion, read a motion which he had intended to propose. He condemned the "yellow" International of Amsterdam, proposed adherence to the Moscow International, and the transfer of the headquarters of the International Union of Bookbinders to that city. He also demanded the boycotting of the International Labour Office, "an institution in the hands of capitalism".

This declaration produced many protests, and the President in closing remarked to the Russian Delegates that their tactics were disorganising the working classes at a time when their unity was most necessary.

## STUDIES AND REPORTS

already issued.

Where the English or French text of a Report has not yet been published it will be issued at a later date.

### Series A.

- Nº 1. THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SPANISH WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS, issued on September 25th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 2. THE DISPUTE IN THE METAL INDUSTRY IN ITALY. TRADE UNION CONTROL OF INDUSTRY, issued on September 25th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 3. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS 1920, issued on October 4th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 4. INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF WORKERS' IN THE FOOD AND DRINK TRADES, issued on October 11th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 5. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE MINERS' FEDERATION OF GREAT BRITAIN. CONFERENCE BETWEEN SIR ROBERT HORNE AND THE MINERS' FEDERATION, issued on October 11th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 6. THE CONGRESS OF THE LABOUR AND SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, issued on October 14th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 7. THE MINERS' INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS, issued on October 19th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 8. THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION. A COMPARISON, issued on October 21st 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 9. THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF METAL WORKERS, issued on October 22nd 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 10. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE MINERS' FEDERATION OF GREAT BRITAIN. CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TRIPLE INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCE, issued on October 26th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 11. THE DISPUTE IN THE METAL INDUSTRY IN ITALY. TRADE UNION CONTROL OF INDUSTRY. (Second part) issued on November 4th 1920. *In French and in English.*

### Series B.

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- " 2. L'ACTION GOUVERNEMENTALE DANS LA LUTTE CONTRE LE CHÔMAGE EN ITALIE, issued on October 27th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 3. THE BULGARIAN LAW ON COMPULSORY LABOUR, issued on November 4th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 4. THE ACTION OF THE SWISS GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT, issued on November 13th 1920. *In English and in French.*

Series D.

- N° 1. STAFF REGULATIONS ON THE FRENCH RAILWAYS, issued on September 4th 1920. *In English and in French.*

Series H.

- N° 1. CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN 1919 (Denmark and Sweden), issued on September 8th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 2. SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE BELGIAN CO-OPERATIVE OFFICE, issued on September 25th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 3. THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF FRENCH CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES, issued on November 24th 1920. *In English and in French.*

Series K.

- N° 1. FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF LANDWORKERS' UNIONS AFFILIATED TO THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNION, issued on November, 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 2. AGRARIAN CONDITIONS IN SPAIN, issued on November 10th 1920. *In English and in French.*
- " 3. SMALL HOLDINGS IN SCOTLAND, issued on November 12th 1920. *In English and in French.*

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR  
OFFICE  
GENEVA

*Studies and Reports*  
*Series A*  
*No. 13*

November 21th 1920.

## The Miners' Strike in Great Britain.

### INTRODUCTION.

On October 16, 1920, a national strike of members of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain began. It came to an end on November 4, 1920. The history of the strike in brief is as follows :

*March 12, 1920 :* The wages of the miners were increased by 20 per cent on gross earnings, exclusive of certain advances given during the war, with a guaranteed minimum increase of 2s. a shift for adults, 1s. for youths of 16 and 17, and 9d for boys under 16.

*May 12, 1920 :* The price of coal for domestic consumption was raised by 14s. 2d a ton, and the price of coal for industrial use by 4s. 2d a ton. Of these increases, 2s. 10d. represented the addition to the miners' wages. The balance represented the difference between the previous selling-price and the cost of production, which difference had up to that time been met by the surplus profits on exported coal.

*July 7, 1920 :* The annual delegate conference of the Miners Federation passed a resolution demanding :

1. An immediate reduction of 14s. 2d. a ton in the price of domestic coal ; and
2. An advance in wages of 2s. a day for adult miners, 1s. for youths from 16 to 18, and 9d. for boys under 16.

*July 26, 1920 :* The Executive of the Miners' Federation were informed by the President of the Board of Trade that the Government could not accede to their claims.

*August 12, 1920 :* A special delegate conference of the Miners' Federation decided by 168 votes to 3 to take a ballot vote of the members for or against a strike to enforce the demands.

*August 31, 1920 :* The result of the ballot was declared :

For a strike	606,782
Against	238,865